

GREEK ISLAND BUTTERFLIES: DODECANES 1983

By GEORGE THOMSON *

In 1983 I spent one week in the Dodecanes (May 27 – June 1), based in Rhodes, taking in day trips to Karpathos (May 29), Kos (May 30) and Simi (May 31). Four days were spent visiting much of Rhodes itself by hired car, but exploration of the other islands was restricted to walking distance from the embarkation point. The main purpose of my visit was to collect samples of *Maniola telmessia* for research and most efforts were directed to this end. Consequently, all other species which were recorded or collected were those which happened to be noticed in the habitats in which *telmessia* was sampled. No effort was made to seek out other species. In spite of this, an interesting group of butterflies from these islands was noted.

In contrast with the experience of Bretherton (1971), butterflies, in general, were conspicuously abundant in Rhodes, Kos and Simi: very few species were local. Throughout the week the days were sunny and hot, but it was cloudy and cool, with some rain, on Karpathos: only two butterflies were seen there. Surprisingly little has been written about the Lepidoptera of Rhodes and the butterfly fauna of the nearby islands is even less well documented. Bretherton (*loc. cit.*) describes a short visit to Rhodes and cites previous lists of species found there (Rebel, 1916, 1924, 1936; Turati, 1929; Turati and Fiori, 1930; Hartig, 1940; Bender, 1963). Turati includes species found in Simi and Karpathos, while Reisser (1946) lists butterflies from this part of the Mediterranean in an important collection of records of Lepidoptera from the Aegean Islands.

The following list includes one species new to Rhodes, *Quercusia quercus*, and three species apparently not so far recorded in the Dodecanes, *Q. quercus*, *Normandia ilicis* and *Cupido minimus*.

My travel to the Dodecanes was funded by an award from the Carnegie Trust for the Universities in Scotland.

PAPILIONIDAE

Papilio machaon giganteus Verity. Rhodes – Faliraki, Filerimos: Kos – Kos Town. Common with females ovipositing.

Papilio podalirius smyrnensis Einer. Rhodes – Filerimos, Lindos. Common at Filerimos, good numbers elsewhere.

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PIERIDAE

Pieris brassicae f. *catoleuca* Rober. Rhodes — Faliraki, Lindos, Filerimos: Kos — Kos Town. Very common, but absent from Simi.

Pieris rapae L. Rhodes — Filerimos: Kos — Kos Town: Karpathos — Pigathia. Common where noted. One only on Karpathos. Absent from Simi.

Pontia daplidice L. Rhodes — Faliraki, Filerimos: Kos — Kos Town. Common.

Gonepteryx farinosa Zeller. Rhodes — Faliraki, Filerimos, Lindos. Common.

Gonepteryx cleopatra fiorii Turati and Fiori. Rhodes — Faliraki, Filerimos, Lindos. Common, but less so than *farinosa*.

Colias crocea Fourcroy. Rhodes — Faliraki, Filerimos: Kos: Kos Town. Very common, including many f. *helice* Hubner.

SATYRIDAE

Hipparchia syraica ghigii Turati. Rhodes — three kilometres north of Faliraki. Males and females, 10 — 15 individuals in lightly wooded crag surrounded by dry garique vegetation. The butterfly settles on tree trunks and branches as well as between and on rocks until disturbed when it flies into the higher trees.

Kirinia roxelana Cramer. Rhodes — Filerimos: Kos — Kos Town. Only a few at Filerimos. Common west of Kos Town. The behaviour of this butterfly is similar to *syraica*, although *roxelana* is also partial to old buildings and ivy on which it settles.

Lasiommata megera emilysa Verity. Kos — Kos Town: Simi — Pedi and Simi Town. Common, but not seen on Rhodes.

Lasiommata maera adrasta Hubner. Rhodes — Faliraki: Simi — Pedi and Simi Town. Fairly common where seen.

Maniola telmessia ornata Turati and Fiori. (fig. 1). Rhodes — Faliraki, Filerimos, Lindos, Apolakia, Profitis Ilias: Kos — Kos Town and valley to west of Kos Town: Simi — Pedi and Simi Town: Karpathos — Pigathia. Very common in a variety of habitats — dry rocky hillside at Faliraki and Simi Town, dry lightly wooded rough grassland at Filerimos, Lindos, Apolakia and west of Kos Town, gardens at Kos Town, gardens at Kos Town and Pigathia (one only) and open woodland at Profitis Ilias. It is to be found sparingly (singles) amongst the dry garique vegetation. In some areas, notably Simi Town and Faliraki, this butterfly appears to develop similar habits to those of other Satyridae, settling on tree trunks, in bushes, on rock faces and in rock crevases.

Hyponephele lupina lupinulus Turati and Fiori (? *intermedia* Stgr.). Kos — west of Kos Town. Four freshly emerged males only in 'heath garique'.

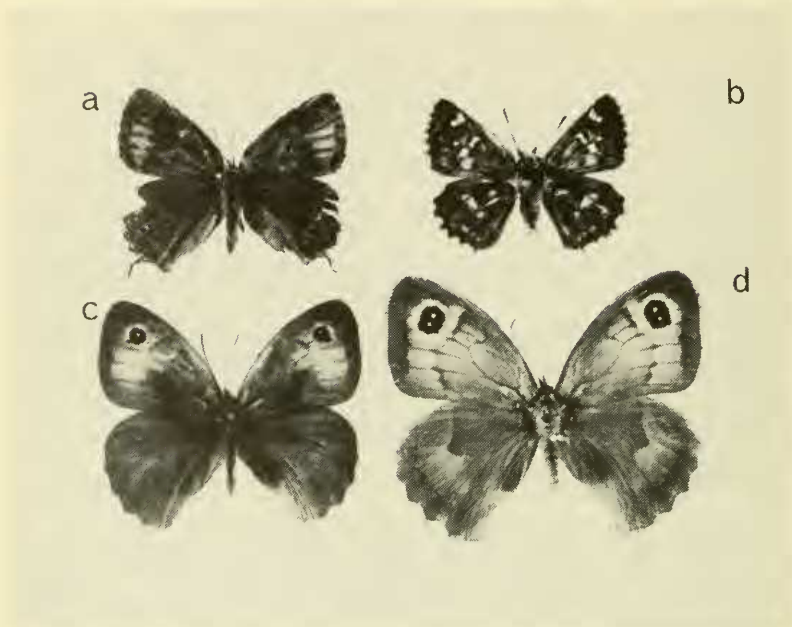


Figure 1. (a) *Normandia ilicis* Esper. ♀. Simi Town, 31.v.1983.
 (b) *Syrictus proto* Esper. ♂. Simi Town, 31.v.1983.
 (c) *Maniola telmessia ornata* Turati and Fiori. ♂.
 Filerimos, Rhodes, 26.v.1983.
 (d) as (c). ♀.

NYMPHALIDAE

Charaxes jasius L. Rhodes — Filerimos, Two only, flying around tops of high trees — one caught.

Limenitis rivularis Stichel. Kos — west of Kos Town. A few very worn individuals.

Vanessa atalanta L. Rhodes — Filerimos. Common.

Cynthia cardui L. Rhodes — Filerimos: Kos Town. Common.

Polygonia egea Cramer. Kos — Kos Town. Several in gardens.

LYCAENIDAE

Callophrys rubi fervida Stgr. Rhodes — Filerimos. A few very worn.

Quercusia quercus L. Rhodes — Filerimos. Two or three individuals, one caught and examined. This species has never been recorded from Rhodes, although it is found in adjacent Turkey.

Normandia ilicis Esper. (fig. 1) Kos — west of Kos Town: Simi-Simi Town. A few males and females in a lightly wooded grass valley

in Kos. One only (female) taken on Simi. Not recorded from the Mediterranean Islands except Elba and Sicily. *N. acaceae abdominalis* Gebh. is recorded from mainland Greece and Turkey and in a very distinct form in Crete (Bretherton, 1966), but the Kos and Simi butterflies are certainly *ilicis*.

Lycaena phlaeas L. Rhodes — Filerimos: Kos — Kos Town. A few at Filerimos. Common to the west and north of Kos Town.

Lampides boeticus L. Rhodes — Filerimos. A few only.

Plebejus loewii robusta Turati. Kos — west of Kos Town. Locally common.

Aricia agestis Schiff. Rhodes — Filerimos. A few only.

Polyommatus icarus Rott. (?ssp.). Rhodes — Filerimos: Kos — Kos Town. Very common.

Cupido minimus Fuessl. Kos — west of Kos Town. Locally common in grassy valley. Found in mainland Greece but new to the Dodecanes.

HESPERIIDAE

Spialia sertorius orbifer Hubner. Rhodes — Filerimos: Simi — Pedi and Simi Town. Locally very common.

Syrictus proto Esper. (fig. 1). Simi — Simi Town. Locally common on a steep, dry, rocky hillside above the village. One male taken. Recorded from Karpathos (Rebel, 1935) and Kythera (Rebel, 1938). Genitalia dissected (fig. 2) and appears to have some features in common with *S. mohammed* Oberthur (gnathos broad, valve costal fold tends to broaden posteriorly).

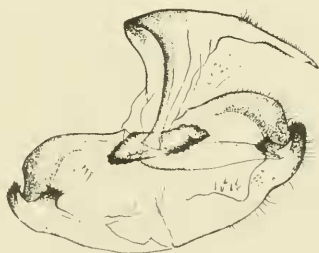


Figure 2. *Syrictus proto* Esper. Male genitalia. Simi Town, 31 May 1983.

Carcharodus alcaea australis Zeller. Kos — west of Kos Town. Locally common.

Thymelicus actaeon Rott. Rhodes — Faliraki, Filerimos, Lindos: Kos — Kos Town. Very common.

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ISLE OF CANNA — A REMARKABLE STRANDING. — In the middle of May the sandy beach at Tarbert, in the middle of the island and on the south side, was found to be covered along the watermark with what was suspected to be fragmented seaweed, but turned out to be millions of dead and dying heather beetles (*Lochmaea suturalis* Thoms.), later identified by Mr. A. A. Allen of Charlton. I was unable to visit the situation myself, but a plastic jar of specimens was brought to me.

This is a unique incident in my experience, the only comparable one being finding the sea on the north side of Canna covered with flying ants one calm day a few years ago. Mr. Peter Wormell, formerly Nature Conservancy warden on the Isle of Rhum, tells me that the Heather Beetle was abundant on the island last summer (1984), and it is possible these specimens may have come from Rhum. The Head Lighthousekeeper on the small island of Heisker about ten miles away tells me that no similar stranding took place there. Canna itself is not thickly covered with heather. — J. L. CAMPBELL. Isle of Canna.